

CHAPTER 6

PREVENTION OF RESIDENTIAL BURGLARY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Situational crime prevention refers to any environmental, community or individual based method which aims to increase the risk, decrease the reward or increase the difficulty of committing crime.

- Bennett and Wright (1984:19)

6.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the objectives of this study was to formulate principles or guidelines that could be applied in the development of residential burglary prevention measures or initiatives (see par. 1.6.5). The aim of this chapter is to provide a theoretical framework for residential burglary prevention, based on the application of the research findings, and the insights gained through the theoretical perspectives and the conceptual framework, as explained in Chapter 2. This Chapter also contains a critical review on crime prevention initiatives at the macro- and meso-levels that were regarded relevant to this study.

6.2 DEFINING CRIME PREVENTION

The primary focus of this study was to define methods that could be applied to the prevention of residential burglary, with a lesser focus on the control of residential burglary. Lab (1997:19) provides the following explanation of the difference between crime prevention and crime control: "Crime prevention represents those efforts that aim to eliminate crime either prior to the initial occurrence or before further activity, whereas crime control alludes to maintenance of a given level of crime and the management of that amount of behaviour". Edelman and Rowe (1983:391) are of the opinion that crime prevention involves steps taken before and crime control steps taken after the commission of a crime.

According to Lab (1997:19), crime prevention entails any action designed to reduce the actual level of crime and/or the perceived fear of crime. He further emphasised that prevention activities should not be restricted to the efforts of the criminal justice system alone, but should include activities of both public and private organisations.

In the White Paper on Safety and Security (South Africa, 1998:14), crime prevention is defined as: "All activities which reduce, deter, or prevent the occurrence of specific crimes firstly, by altering the environment in which they occur, secondly by changing the conditions which are thought to cause them, and thirdly by providing a strong deterrent in the form of an effective Justice System".

In the *Manual for Community Based Crime Prevention*, drafted by the National Crime Prevention Centre of the Department of Safety and Security (South Africa, 2000:5), the following inclusive definition of crime prevention is given: "Crime prevention involves responding to a few priority problems, using targeted multi-agency programmes. These programmes aim to address the causes of and opportunities for particular crime problems. They should also enforce laws, ensure that order is maintained in the day to day activities of the community and reduce public fear of crime."

From the mentioned descriptions of crime prevention, the following could be concluded:

- that the aim of crime prevention is to reduce the actual level of crime and/or the perceived fear of crime, and
- to achieve this by means of changing the conditions which are causing crime; altering the environment in which specific crimes occur; and by providing a strong deterrent in the form of an effective criminal justice system.

In the context of this study, burglary prevention initiatives can be defined as any action, taken through public and/or private initiative, that are aimed to prevent residential burglary from occurring, and if occurring, to limit the damage, and to reduce the fear of being victimised. To be able to apply appropriate measures at the individual level, implies that an assessment be made of the vulnerability of that specific location. In this regard, the social geographer, with his/her specific knowledge of the 'geography of crime' and equipped to study spatial patterns and dynamics, can make a useful contribution to the analysis of human-environment interactions and to assess the vulnerability of a specific residential location. The geography of crime prevention can therefore be described as: to assess the vulnerability of specific locations and to suggest counter or security measures that could reduce the occurrence of (burglary) offences.

In the next section, an overview is given of different theoretical approaches and strategies to crime prevention that served as a theoretical basis in the development of an operational approach to burglary prevention as presented in the latter part of this chapter.

6.3 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON CRIME PREVENTION

A brief overview is given on three different conceptual frameworks to crime prevention, as proposed by Brantingham and Faust (1976), Barkan (1997) and Walklate (1996).

6.3.1 Classification of Brantingham and Faust

According to Brantingham and Faust (1976:284), crime prevention approaches can be divided into three categories, which they define as:

- **Primary crime prevention** identifies conditions in the physical and social environment that provide opportunities for or precipitate criminal acts. The purpose of primary crime prevention is to alter the circumstances in such a way that crime will not be committed.
- **Secondary crime prevention** engages in early identification of potential offenders and seeks to intervene prior to the commission of illegal activity.
- **Tertiary crime prevention** deals with actual offenders with the purpose of preventing further criminal offences.

Lab (1997:21) used this typology in his book *Crime Prevention: approaches, practices and evaluations* to provide a comprehensive description of the different approaches and methods to crime prevention. Table 6.1 provides a summary of these approaches and methods. According to Lab (1997:20), primary prevention measures aim at making crime less attractive to and more difficult for the offender to commit. Through the implementation of a wide range of possible methods (see Table 6.1), the attractiveness of crime will diminish accordingly, and hopefully prevent the initial decision to commit an offence.

Inclusive to secondary prevention is the ability of society and the criminal justice system to correctly identify and predict crime predisposed people and situations (Lab, 1997:22). Situational prevention, for example, seeks to identify existing problems at the micro-level and institute interventions that are developed specifically for that given problem. Closely associated with situational prevention is the community approach (policing) which relies on citizen involvement in the solving of neighbourhood problems or concerns. Secondary intervention may also include primary methods of crime prevention. The difference between primary and secondary prevention therefore is that primary prevention aims at keeping problems that lead to criminal activity from arising, whilst secondary prevention focuses on problems that already exist and are fostering deviant behaviour (Lab, 1997:22).

TABLE 6.1: TYPOLOGY OF CRIME PREVENTION APPROACHES AND METHODS

| EXAMPLES OF CRIME PREVENTION APPROACHES AND METHODS | | |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| Primary prevention | Secondary prevention | Tertiary prevention |
| Environmental design | Identification and prediction | Specific deterrence |
| Neighbourhood watch | Situational crime prevention | Incapacitation |
| General Deterrence (through the criminal justice system) | Community policing | Rehabilitation and treatment |
| Public education | Crime area analysis | - |
| Social crime prevention (e.g. addressing poverty) | Substance abuse (e.g. alcohol and drugs) | |
| Private security | Schools crime prevention | |

Source: Adapted from Lab, 1997: 21

From this explanation, the researcher is of the opinion that it will be difficult to distinguish between primary and secondary prevention, because in real life situations it is difficult to collect when crime started to become a 'problem' in a specific area. Perceptions of residents in this regard will also play a role. In as far as secondary prevention is focussed on a specific problem, in a specific area, it is quite different from primary prevention, which has a broader or more general focus.

Within the realm of tertiary prevention (Lab, 1997:23), lie the majority of activities such as arrests, prosecutions, incarceration, treatment and rehabilitation. Non-justice system activities such as private enterprise correctional programmes, also form part of this category of prevention.

6.3.2 Classification of Barkan

Barkan (1997:537-546) also proposed three approaches to crime prevention, which almost correspond to Brantingham and Faust's primary, secondary, and tertiary prevention respectively. The three categories can be summarised as follows:

- Social, cultural and community crime prevention.** Barkan (1997: 537) argues that many of the criminogenic values in the United States are rooted in the capitalist economic system and need to be replaced. He mentions societal aspects such as economic inequality, economic deprivation, racial discrimination, and aspects of masculinity that prompt males to be more crime-prone than females. Some of the elements he proposes to be included in crime prevention strategies, are the following:

- social policies to create proper-paying jobs for the poor;
- government economic aid for people who cannot find work or who find work but still live in poverty;
- measures to restore the social integration and strengthen the social institutions of urban neighbourhoods;
- reduce housing and population density;
- reduce urban neighbourhood dilapidation;
- change male socialisation practices so that notions of masculinity move away from violence and other criminogenic attitudes and values; and
- social policies to reduce social and economic inequality between women and men.

■ **Developmental crime prevention.** Barkan (1997:40) is of the opinion that serious crime is disproportionately committed by a small group of chronic offenders whose anti-social behaviour began before adolescence. This approach recognizes that the seeds of juvenile delinquency and adult crime are planted long before delinquency and crime appear, and that it is essential to focus prevention efforts on developmental experiences in early childhood. Intervention policies he suggested, include:

- well-funded, early childhood intervention programs for high-risk children and their families;
- affordable, high-quality child day care for all parents who need to work outside the home, and flexible work schedules to allow parents to spend more time with their children;
- measures to improve the quality of schools, especially in urban areas, where schools are generating criminogenic conditions; and
- expansion of the network of battered women's shelters as well as rape crisis centres, that will reduce the likelihood that any children involved will continue to grow up in violent households.

■ **Criminal justice approaches.** Barkan (1997:545) is very critical of the United States' criminal justice approaches, which he describes as somewhat arbitrary, and where wealthy individuals and organisations committing harmful behaviour generally avoid legal sanctions. According to Barkan (1997:541), current criminal justice strategies and approaches have little if any success in reducing crime rates in the USA. He maintains that crime reduction initiatives sometimes come at great financial cost and are threats to civil liberties and civil rights. He further argues that the prison experience is more likely to make prisoners worse than better, as it is a system where they learn no marketable skills and have no jobs awaiting them when they leave prison.

- Barkan (1997:542) is in favour of the following interventions, of which some might not reduce crime rates but at least could raise public trust and confidence in the criminal justice system and operate in line with democratic values:
- reduce reliance on imprisonment and place more emphasis on community correction;
- prisons and jails should be smaller, overcrowding should be reduced, and decrepit prison and jail conditions should be improved;
- expansion of community policing;
- measures to reduce police brutality;
- steps to increase gun control efforts; and
- increase intolerance of white-collar crime and political corruption.

Although imprisonment has not been shown to be successful for common criminals, it may be more effective as a deterrent for potential white-collar and political offenders (Barkan, 1997:542).

Barkan's view of the United States criminal justice system is not fully applicable to the South African situation where a different system applies, but nonetheless it is worthy of note, seeing that the problems of overcrowding of prisons and the pressures under which the criminal justice system functions, also prevail in South Africa.

6.3.3 Classification of Walklate

Walklate (1996:297) made use of different themes in her analysis of crime prevention strategies which she constructed to encourage critical thinking about the different emphases in crime prevention. She distinguished between the followings strategies:

- **Offender-centred strategies.** This school of thought believes that more prosecutions, convictions and punishment will prevent crime. They argue that a prison acts as a deterrent to crime, because it incapacitates offenders from further offending and because it also serves the purpose of retribution (Walklate, 1996:298). This approach could also have a 'softer' edge in the sense that prisons are regarded as institutions for rehabilitation and not punishment. This is based on the premise that offenders are educable, trainable and supervisable and that, by targeting those who are at risk of offending, their behaviour could be redirected.

The effectiveness of offender-centred strategies is significantly limited by the presumption that the cause of crime lies within individual pathology. A critique against

this approach is that available evidence indicates that the causes of crime are also of a social nature, which offender-centred strategies are not designed to address (Walklate, 1996:298).

- **Victim-centred strategies.** The focus of the victim-centred strategies is on the victim, either by way of victim support or to avoid possible victimisation. Victim-centred strategies focus on 'empowerment' - that is, to enable people to engage in positive activities; or they focus on 'blaming the victim' - looking for ways of reducing crime by encouraging individuals to change their risk behaviour, for example, staying at home rather than going out (Walklate, 1996:302).

An example of this approach is the fact that insurance companies lay down criteria before they provide insurance coverage. In doing so, they place the responsibility for the prevention of burglary on the owner (victim), and in failing to comply with these rules, the insurance company does not pay out the claim.

- **Environment-centred strategies.** Environment-centred strategies include approaches such as situational crime prevention and the 'designing out' of crime (Walklate, 1996:303). The strategy is usually aimed at a specific crime, for example burglary, and to manage, design or manipulate the immediate environment with the purpose of reducing the opportunity for crime. This may include measures such as target hardening or increasing surveillance, for example through the use of surveillance cameras.

In environmental strategies criminal behaviour is viewed as a product of the opportunities presented by physical structures, and that the offender engages in a rational decision-making process prior to the offence. Whereas environmental-centred strategies can be regarded as effective in the prevention of property crimes, it is unable to prevent violent crimes such as domestic violence, child abuse and racially motivated crimes.

The increase in private security, as well as situational and environmental strategies has a profound effect on changing the urban landscape. Through private security, the more affluent societies become 'fortress' suburbs, which further reinforce the separation between the wealthy and the poor societies (Walklate, 1996:327). In South Africa there is also an increasing tendency to 'close off' neighbourhoods through security fencing and access control, and the establishment of so-called security villages.

- **Community-centred strategies.** Community-centred crime prevention programmes

focus on the needs and involvement of local communities in terms of crime prevention. It frequently advocates a combination of both situational and social crime prevention initiatives. Social crime prevention, as opposed to situational crime prevention, endeavours to address the root causes of crime. Through Neighbourhood Watch, for example, the presumption is made that increased surveillance could deter criminals by encouraging citizens to be the eyes and ears of the police on the streets. Simultaneously it could enhance social cohesion and greater trust between citizens, and a consequent reduction in the fear of crime (Walklate, 1996:308).

The concept of community safety or safer city programmes is based on multi-agency co-operation between formal agencies, informal agencies and community networks. The establishment of partnerships between private and state agencies is an important element in the supply of financial resources. The aim of these programmes is to reduce crime, lessen the fear of crime, and to create safer environments where economic and community life can thrive (Walklate, 1996:317). It requires the formulation of a locally based action plan, and an implementation process, usually involving a complex combination of situational or environmental measures and social strategies.

Walklate (1996:316) argues that because of the complexity of these initiatives it has proven difficult to evaluate their effectiveness. She further cautions that the central roles of the police and the local authorities in these programmes sometimes lead to a top-down approach, neglecting the real needs of the people living in those communities. These programmes will also have less effect in communities which are often economically deprived and who experience an adverse relationship with the official structures, and who may even try to undermine such initiatives.

6.4 A HIERARCHICAL APPROACH TOWARDS CRIME PREVENTION

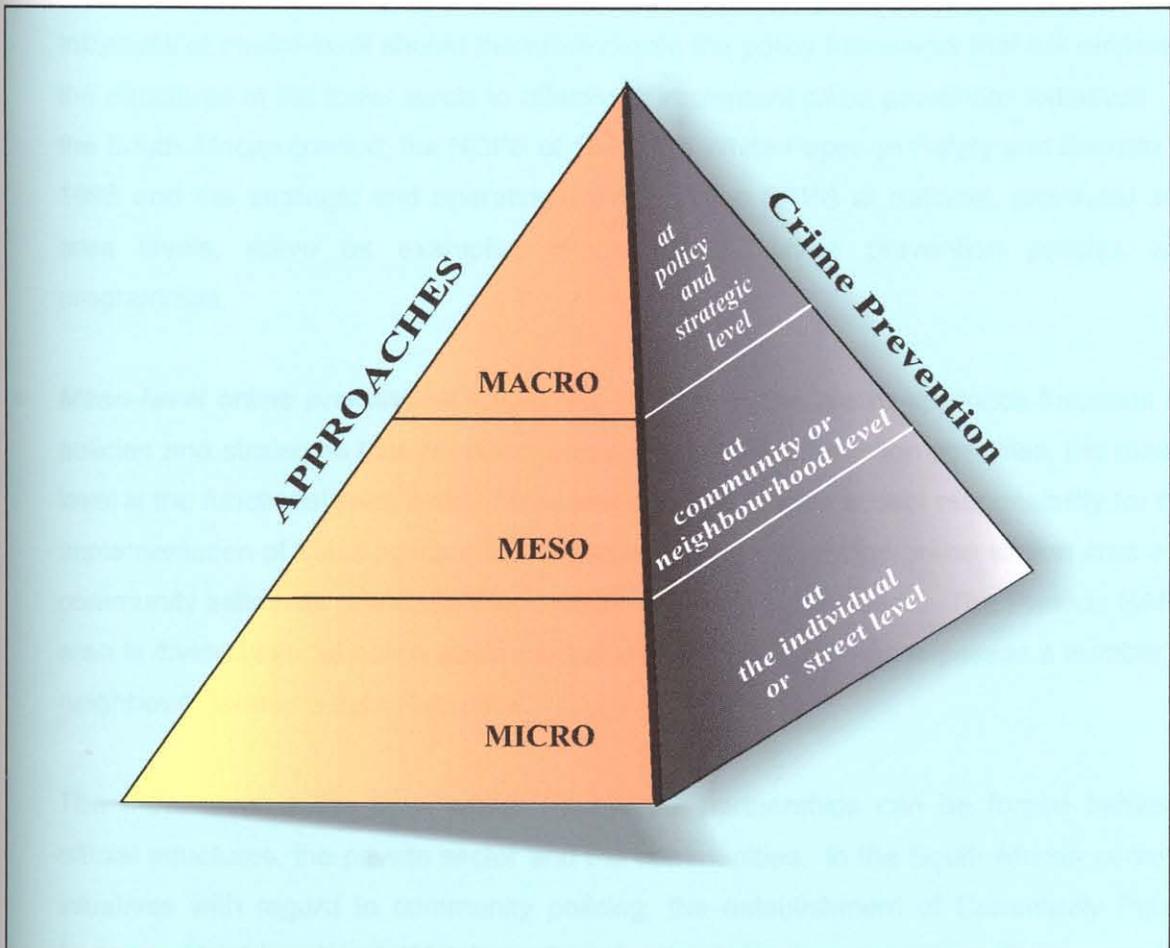
The number of methods and techniques that can be applied to crime prevention are almost unlimited. As Lab (1997:23) observes, "crime prevention techniques are only limited by the imagination of the individuals interested in decreasing the levels of crime and fear of crime." From the three theoretical perspectives described (see par. 6.3), it is evident that a wide range of activities are involved in any crime prevention strategy, which is directed to influence or alter behaviour or situations concerning the offender, the victim, the social and physical environment, and the criminal justice system.

Moreover it is clear that these crime prevention approaches and strategies primarily provide a horizontal perspective to crime prevention and ignore, to a certain extent, the hierarchical (vertical) dimension that emphasise the scale and management of crime prevention

initiatives and programmes. Crime prevention programmes or initiatives at the local level may be more effective if supported by initiatives taken at the macro- and meso-levels, for example, though financial resources or in terms of planning, implementation and monitoring of projects.

The researcher is thus of the opinion that adding a hierarchical dimension to existing crime prevention approaches and strategies would enrich their effectiveness. For this reason, the same rationale as in the case of the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6), to distinguish between the macro-, meso- and micro-levels in the burglary process, was applied to develop an operationalised approach to residential burglary prevention. The hierarchical approach that aims to integrate the horizontal as well as the vertical dimensions of crime prevention strategies, is illustrated in Figure 6.1.

FIGURE 6.1: LEVELS OF CRIME PREVENTION



The three levels of crime prevention that coincide with the levels in the conceptual framework (see par. 2.6), can be explained as follows:

- **Macro-level crime prevention initiatives.** Crime prevention at the macro-level is captured in the policies and strategies promulgated through the national, provincial and

local government legislative powers, as well as the plans and strategies of the executive arms of the state, especially the Departments of Safety and Security, Correctional Services, and of Justice. Besides from these main role players, the participation and involvement of other welfare departments and the private sector are essential for the successful implementation of crime prevention programmes.

As a result of the multi-dimensional nature of crime and its impact, it is widely acknowledged that multi-agency programmes are needed to effectively address the problem of crime. The principle of multi-dimensionality also implies that crime prevention initiatives should include elements of primary, secondary as well as tertiary crime prevention measures. Consequently, crime prevention strategies at the macro-level should not only be directed at improving the criminal justice system, but also address the causes of criminogenic situations. Furthermore they should be in the position to prioritise types of crime that need special attention.

Initiatives at macro-level should therefore create the policy framework that will empower the structures at the lower levels to effectively implement crime prevention initiatives. In the South African context, the NCPS of 1996, the White Paper on Safety and Security of 1998 and the strategic and operational plans of the SAPS at national, provincial and area levels, serve as examples of macro-level crime prevention policies and programmes.

■ **Meso-level crime prevention initiatives.** Whereas the macro-approach focusses on policies and strategies that will direct and enable crime prevention agencies, the meso-level is the functional level where crime prevention agencies accept responsibility for the implementation of these policies and strategies. In this study the police station area and community initiatives constitute the meso-level of crime prevention. The Pretoria SAPS area is divided into 28 police station areas and each of them encompasses a number of neighbourhoods or a suburban area.

The meso-level is the level where meaningful partnerships can be forged between official structures, the private sector and the communities. In the South African context, initiatives with regard to community policing, the establishment of Community Police Forums, Neighbourhood Watch and projects of Business Against Crime can be regarded as meso-level initiatives.

■ **Micro-level crime prevention initiatives.** The micro-level of crime prevention is focussed on the individual residence and its immediate environment. The onus for crime prevention at this level is primarily on the individual household alone or in co-

operation with the neighbours, residents in the street, or members in the same residential block. In the South African context, private security companies have become an important role player in the safeguarding of individual residences. Target hardening, improved personal security, good neighbourliness, and the introduction of Block Watch can all be regarded as micro-level prevention initiatives. At micro-level crime prevention is primarily based on private initiatives which have cost implications for those involved.

From a theoretical perspective, initiatives at the micro-level will most often engage situational crime prevention, whereas those at the meso- and macro-level will focus on the criminal justice system (the arrest, prosecution and conviction of criminals), and to create safer communities and cities through a variety of possible crime prevention programmes, including environmental design, community based crime prevention, school projects and social crime prevention.

The distinction between macro-, meso- and micro-level crime prevention should not be regarded as watershed divisions but as an addition to the more horizontally classifications of crime prevention approaches. Considering both the hierarchical (vertical) and horizontal dimensions is the basis of an integrated approach to crime prevention. Such an approach will be better suited to combine the resources and expertise at the different levels in order to realise the aims of crime prevention, that is, to reduce the levels of crime and to create an environment in which people can feel safe and secure.

6.5 AN INTEGRATED APPROACH TO BURGLARY PREVENTION

In this section principles for the development of an integrated approach to prevent residential burglary are laid down. By 'integrated' is meant that the approach should focus on the main elements of the burglary process, namely: the burglar, the neighbourhood environment, the residents, and the situational conditions, as well as an alignment in structures and management of prevention initiatives at the macro-, meso- and micro-levels. An integrated approach further implies a multi-agency approach between the different agencies involved in crime prevention in order to have a co-ordinated effort in addressing the many diverse angles to crime prevention.

The purpose is therefore not to construct a burglary prevention strategy or programme, but to provide a framework of guidelines and principles that can be applied in the construction of such strategies or programmes, with the emphasis on the identification of risk factors and possible prevention actions to be taken. The integrated approach to burglary prevention can

also be presented in a matrix format, where the horizontal axis represents the different approaches and methods to burglary prevention, and the vertical axis, the different levels of location and the risk factors attached to the levels of location. The framework of principles and guidelines for burglary prevention initiatives is presented in Table 6.2.

The conceptual framework for burglary prevention (see Table 6.2) proposes a specific sequence of reasoning and includes the following phases:

- First, to describe the location of the residence under investigation in terms of its macro-environment (in the city or town), its meso-environment (in the police station area and neighbourhood), and its micro-environment (in the street, block or complex).
- Second, to identify and assess the risk factors of the specific location that might have a bearing on the vulnerability of that location/residence. The risk factors as listed in Table 6.2, were based on the research findings (explained in Chapter 4 and 5) as having an impact on the vulnerability of a specific residence. Most of the risk factors should be assessed after sufficient information is gathered, for example, to determine the comparative burglary rates (statistics) between provinces, cities, and police station areas. To assist in the assessment, the risk factors can be given a rating from 'high', if regarded as a priority or of great importance, to 'medium' and 'low', if regarded as of lesser importance.
- Third, to decide on the approach and the type of prevention initiatives that should be implemented, and at what levels or combination of levels (macro-, meso-, or micro-) it should focus. This phase implies an in-depth understanding of the different approaches and methods of burglary prevention, as well as expert knowledge of planning, implementation and monitoring of burglary prevention programmes and projects.

The prevention measures or initiatives can take many forms, depending on the goals and objectives set out from the beginning, and can vary from time-specific operations, to medium term projects, to long term programmes, as well as permanent changes to the physical and social environment, including the installation of specific safety devices. The third phase implies that, when a project approach is followed, many considerations should be taken into account, for example, proper planning is needed to determine the aim and objectives of the planned action, what resources would be needed, the time frames and who would be responsible for the implementation and management of the action plans. Furthermore, it is essential to monitor and evaluate the progress made at regular intervals to determine whether or not adjustments are needed.

TABLE 6.2: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR BURGLARY PREVENTION INITIATIVES

| CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR BURGLARY PREVENTION: APPLIED TO THE CASE STUDIES | | | | | | |
|---|--|--|-----------------|---|---|--|
| | DESCRIBE THE LOCATION OF SPECIFIC RESIDENCE | ASSESS THE RISK FACTORS | | SUGGESTED PREVENTION MEASURES | | |
| | | Risk factors/ indicators* | Rating: H/M/L** | Aim | Prevention measures/ initiatives | Actors |
| MACRO-LEVEL | Residence X within the metropole of Pretoria | Relating to burglar: - Burglary rates in Pretoria compared to other cities - Proportion of motivated burglars in society | | (a) To address the root causes for criminal behaviour. (b) To address the efficiency of the criminal justice system | Social crime prevention: - Job creation and upliftment - Grants for the unemployed - Developmental program for preschool and school children Criminal justice system: - Capacity building - Rehabilitation program | Multi-agency approach between welfare departments, local authorities, SAPS, Justice, Correctional Serves, and the private sector |
| MESO-LEVEL | Residence X within the police station area of Pretoria West or Garsfontein | Relating to neighbourhood: - Affluence of neighbourhood - Comparative trends in burglary rates - Accessibility to and from neighbourhood - Proximity to high crime areas - Presence and free movement of strangers - Apathy of neighbours - Insufficient patrols | | (a) To observe/ monitor the movement of potential burglar(s) (b) To control the movement of potential burglar(s) from outside (c) To address the fear of burglary | 'Hot spot' operations: - Law enforcement activities - Road blocks - Patrols Community policing: - Community Policing Forums - Trauma treatment centres Community organisation: - Neighbourhood watch/ civilian patrols: Enclosed neighbourhoods/ Security villages | Multi-agency approach between police stations, local authority, community organisations, homeowners associations, and private security companies |
| MICRO-LEVEL | Residence X at a specific street address | Relating to situational conditions: (a) Residents: - Residents are absent from home - Residents are asleep | | (a) To deter burglar(s) from selecting a potential target | Situational crime prevention: - Change routine activities - Improve awareness | Individual household, Street committee, Private security companies |

Table 6.2 continues

TABLE 6.2 (continued)

| | DESCRIBE THE LOCATION OF SPECIFIC RESIDENCE | ASSESS THE RISK FACTORS | | SUGGESTED PREVENTION MEASURES | | |
|-------------|---|---|-----------------|--|--|--|
| | | Risk factors/ indicators* | Rating: H/M/L** | Aim | Measures | Actors |
| MICRO-LEVEL | Residence X at a specific street address | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residents more at risk e.g. being single - Residents' carelessness (b) Surveillance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Poor surveillance - Poor visibility around the residence (c) Physical design: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Visible signs of wealth - Easy entrance/escape e.g. big windows, sliding doors, concealed entrances (d) Security: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easy access to site e.g. no fence, electrified/ razor wire, surveillance camera - Security gates at doors insufficient - Burglar bars at windows insufficient - Lighting insufficient - Absence of watch dog - No alarm system - Not connected to an armed reaction unit | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (b) To prevent potential burglar(s) from entering residential site (c) To prevent potential burglar(s) from entering the building (d) To limit the damage in case of a burglary (e) To address the fear of burglary | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Improve good neighbourliness - Improve surveillance (formal and informal) e.g. Block Watch - Improve visibility, e.g. open line of sight and effective lighting - Change design features (where possible), e.g. limit sliding doors, improve visibility / surveillance - Safeguarding/control access to site, e.g. surveillance camera, electrified fence, or security guards - Target hardening, e.g. through effective locks, security gates, burglar bars - Install alarm system - Connect alarm system to armed reaction unit | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual household, Street committee, Private security companies |

* The risk factors coincide with the research findings as described in Chapter 5.

** The rating of High (H), Medium (M), or Low (L) can be based on empirical evidence or as being perceived.

Agencies in South Africa involved in crime prevention, have little experience in crime reduction programmes aimed at specific crimes, and can learn from well established institutions in other countries, such as the Policing and Reducing Crime Unit that forms part of the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate of the Home Office in Britain (Bennett & Durie, 1999).

The conceptual framework for burglary prevention, as explained in Table 6.2, makes a clear distinction between the three levels of burglary prevention initiatives. This differentiation can be summarised as follows:

- At macro-level, the primary focus of burglary prevention is to correct, in broader society, criminogenic conditions that are associated with the root causes of burglary behaviour. Success will largely depend on the capacity and efficiency of the criminal justice system (including the police service) to arrest, prosecute and convict burglars, and to institute further measures that are aimed at rehabilitating convicted burglars.
- At meso-level, the primary focus of burglary prevention is to safeguard communities or neighbourhoods from potential acts of burglary, *inter alia* by engaging community organisations in burglary prevention initiatives. Visible, community policing and community actions aimed at observing, monitoring, or controlling the movement of potential burglars may serve as a deterrent to potential burglars, and may also help to create a feeling of safety amongst residents.
- At micro-level, the primary focus of burglary prevention is to safeguard the individual household from potential acts of burglary. Through the implementation of various situational crime prevention measures, the burglar, who intended to break in, may find it increasingly difficult to enter the premises and may be deterred from selecting that specific residence. The more security or safety measures installed, the greater the chance that residents would feel safer in their immediate environment, and the greater the chance that, in the case of a burglary, the damage would be limited. The implementation of security measures at the individual level is the prime responsibility of the owner, sometimes at considerable expense.

In residential areas where individual efforts to improve security are linked with crime prevention initiatives of the local police and the community, there will be a greater chance of success than in those incidents where crime prevention initiatives are implemented in isolation.

6.6 BURGLARY PREVENTION IN THE MICRO-ENVIRONMENT

In the Bill of Rights, the Constitution clearly states that everyone has the right to freedom and security of the person, which includes *inter alia*, the right to be free from all forms of violence from either public or private sources (section 12 (1) (c)), *and that no one may be deprived of property except in terms of law of general application, and no law may permit arbitrary deprivation of property* (section 25 (1)). As a result of the limited capacity and other problems experienced in the law enforcement agencies and in the criminal justice system in general, and the subsequent failure to protect all citizens' rights in terms of safety, security and property, there has been a significant growth in self-protection and private security measures in recent years. Over the last decade, for example, the turnover of the private security sector grew from an estimated R1,2 billion in 1990 to R11 billion in 1999. Considering these figures with relation to the national budget of the SAPS of R15,5 billion for the year 2000/2001, the growth is phenomenal (Schönteich, 2000:19).

In the preamble to the Security Industry Regulation Bill (South Africa, 2001:1), it is also stated that "the protection of fundamental rights to life and security of the person as well as the right not to be deprived of property, is fundamental to the well-being and to the social and economic development of every person". It is in this context that the private security industry sees for itself an important role to play in protecting and safeguarding personal rights and property.

In this study it was found that, at the individual level, the residents would decide upon what measures to take after the occurrence of a burglary, depending on their financial position and the level of fear and feelings of safety they had experienced. In most instances the households had opted for security measures that would suit their financial position and that would make them feel safer. The result was that most of the households did not first undertake a risk assessment of possible vulnerabilities before they implemented new security measures.

This study has shown that the residents in the less affluent areas of Pretoria West tended to improve their security by implementing additional target hardening measures such as trellis fences, reinforced burglar bars and security gates. They were also inclined to value good neighbourliness, which in effect served as an informal method of surveillance. Good visibility from the street was another characteristic of most residential sites in the Pretoria West area.

In the more affluent areas of Pretoria East, the residents also tended to implement additional

target hardening measures, but would further improve their security by installing alarm systems and by subscribing to armed reaction units. The residents in these areas also relied on appropriate insurance coverage, which was not the case in the Pretoria West area.

According to Landman (2000:7), individual households in the more affluent areas, tend to "turn their houses into fortified bastions and their neighbourhoods into walled towns". This tendency will most probably weaken community cohesion and create 'distance' between neighbours, which in itself may add to a situation where neighbours are less alert and involved with each other.

In both the case study areas of Pretoria West and Garsfontein (Pretoria East) there was an absence of involvement in community based crime prevention initiatives at either street or neighbourhood levels, like establishing Street or Neighbourhood Watch, or conducting citizen patrols, or promoting awareness programmes aimed at monitoring the movement of strangers. The researcher is of the opinion that much more could be done to involve individual households in community organisation aimed at crime prevention, for instance, to appeal to the local police through the CPF to conduct crime prevention/protective operations in their residential area, such as, road blocks, security patrols, or search operations. It would also be feasible for a community to contract a private security company to conduct regular security patrols.

In applying the approach presented in Table 6.2, the individual household would first have to assess the vulnerabilities of their residence (in terms of the risk factors), before implementing any prevention measures. The principles of situational crime prevention seem to be most appropriate to guide the process and decisions of what type of security measures to implement. These principles imply that the individual household should try to reduce the opportunities for burglary by increasing the effort in which burglars must invest, increasing the risk of being caught and reducing their reward (Murray, 1995:358). The aim would thus be to change the vulnerabilities in such a way that they would reduce the opportunities for burglary.

At the micro-environment level and with the application of situational crime prevention, the focus is on changing the situational conditions and not on the root social or psychological factors that might have caused criminal behaviour in the first place. In Section 6.7 more attention is given to crime prevention initiatives at the macro- and meso-levels that were not only aimed at reducing opportunities for crime, but also aimed at changing criminal behaviour.

6.7 CRITICAL REVIEW OF CRIME PREVENTION INITIATIVES AT THE MACRO- AND MESO-LEVELS IN SOUTH AFRICA

In this section special attention is given to crime prevention initiatives at the macro- and meso-level that may have a bearing on the prevention of residential burglary.

6.7.1 Macro-level initiatives

Within the Government since 1994 there has been a growing realisation of the need and value of crime prevention that eventually culminated in the acceptance of the NCPS in 1996, and the White Paper on Safety and Security in 1998. These policy and strategy papers did not only provide a clear framework of principles and guidelines with regard to crime prevention, but also suggested structures and processes for implementation.

The NCPS was designed as a comprehensive multi-agency approach to crime prevention. It aims to influence the operations of the Departments of Safety and Security, Justice, Correctional Services, Welfare, Defence, Intelligence, as well as Health and Education. It also established new co-ordination structures, including joint decision making by Directors-General and Ministers of NCPS departments (South Africa, 1998:12). The four focus areas of the NCPS around which projects are undertaken are: the criminal justice process, environmental design, public values and education, and transnational crime. Research, advocacy and facilitation of crime prevention programmes are seen as a priority, although still in its embryonic stages, due to a lack of dedicated capacity and resources. In essence the NCPS provides a national vision and framework for preventing crime.

Although the NCPS-document made mention of environmental design as one of the pillars of the NCPS, it also indicated that Government had no policy on environmental design and that the private sector concerns led the way (South Africa, 1996:67). The NCPS nonetheless emphasises the importance of environmental design, as shown in the following objectives:

- To encourage awareness of the possibility of environmental design in reducing and preventing crime.
- To highlight the importance of environmental design in areas beyond physical architecture, motor vehicle security and urban planning. In particular, environmental design principles could be more widely implemented in the design of delivery systems, the organisation of industries and accounting systems, particularly within the public sector.

The challenge was taken up by the Division of Building Technology at the CSIR that initiated a research project on *Reducing Crime Through Environmental Design*, and which resulted in numerous research publications on environmental design. The publications provide a good overview on the current status of environmental design in South Africa, but contain little empirical evidence on the real nature of environmental design in South Africa. One of the publications, *Environmental Design for Safer Communities in South Africa* (1998), can be used as a manual in the development of crime prevention programmes based on the principles of environmental design.

To give effect to NCPS and the White Paper on Safety and Security, a National Crime Prevention Strategy Centre (NCPSC) was established within the Department of Safety and Security to assist with the initiation, co-ordination and facilitation of crime prevention programmes. Functions of the NCPSC are *inter alia* (South Africa, 1998:21):

- To mobilise other government departments such as Justice, Correctional Services, Welfare, Education, Public Services and Administration and Transport who have a role to play in crime prevention initiatives.
- To assist provincial and local government in preventing crime by providing research, technical guidance, training and the sharing of best practice. This will necessitate a strong research, monitoring and information component.
- To assist in co-ordinating and managing the prevention of certain priority crimes as identified in the annual planning process. This includes to work in partnership with the provinces, local governments and civil society to develop crime prevention programmes.
- To monitor the effectiveness of social crime prevention interventions.

The NCPSC, in co-operation with the CSIR and the ISS, published in 2000 *A Manual for Community Based Crime Prevention*, with the aim to assist local authorities to design their own crime prevention plans.

The White Paper on Safety and Security (South Africa, 1998:14) emphasises two approaches to crime prevention, first, crime prevention through effective criminal justice, and, second, social crime prevention. The first is based on the rationale that effective law enforcement creates a strong deterrent to crime, and that the opportunity for crime will be reduced by making it more difficult to commit crimes, more risky and less rewarding. Focus areas of this approach are:

- to improve the investigative capacity of the SAPS;
- to implement targeted visible policing; and
- to meet the needs of victims through adequate service delivery.

Secondly, according to the White Paper on Safety and Security (South Africa, 1998:19), social crime prevention is a collective term to include various categories of crime prevention strategies, which can be grouped under the following headings:

- **Developmental crime prevention:** Projects include early learning programmes, structured parenting guidance and support programmes for youth at risk, which aim at training and enhancing prospects for employment. This approach requires the commitment and assistance of many government departments, some of whom are already undertaking such projects.
- **Situational crime prevention:** This approach encompasses crime prevention through environmental design, aiming at diminishing opportunities for crime by modifying the situations in which offending occurs. Projects include, for example, improving mechanisms for surveillance through better lighting and layout of urban centres.
- **Community crime prevention:** This approach suggests that communities take responsibility for crime prevention initiatives in their own neighbourhoods. Local programmes include effective rehabilitation through effective community correction aimed at reducing repeated offending.
- **Continuous improvements to the integrated justice system:** An effective justice system acts as a deterrent and improves support to victims and the management of offenders. It is therefore essential that the justice system operates as a single enterprise.

Social crime prevention therefore advocates the implementation of crime prevention as a focussed effort to address specific crime problems, by means of multifaceted strategies that aim to combat and prevent a single offence or category of offences. A multi-departmental or multi-sectoral approach is thus required, that will involve all levels of government and include relevant organisations of civil society (South Africa, 1998:20).

In accordance to the objectives of the White Paper on Safety and Security, the Government announced its strategy on crime in the beginning of 2000. The departments involved in the criminal justice system jointly identified priorities or 'strategic interventions' aimed at addressing the incidence of crime, public disorder and inefficiencies in the justice system. These 'strategic interventions' could broadly be summarised as follows (Schönsteich, 2000:7-10):

- To enhance the concept of social crime prevention by addressing the issue of endemic poverty. Government has, for example, adopted an Urban Renewal Programme, which is a multi-faceted approach dealing with problems in high-density poverty ridden urban areas. Pilot projects were also launched in high density crime areas around the country, focussing on high visibility police presence, frequent police patrols, and intelligence driven road blocks and search operations.
- To improve prosecution-led and intelligence-driven investigations, through *inter alia*, the establishment of the Directorate of Special Operations (known as the Scorpions) that will focus its activities on priority crimes such as vehicle hijacking, syndicate drug and arms dealings, transnational crimes, money laundering and corruption within the criminal justice system. Another priority is to improve the methods of intelligence gathering and closer co-operation between the intelligence agencies, the SAPS and the Scorpions.
- To bolster effective border control through a national co-ordinated strategy aiming at combatting cross-border crimes. These include the smuggling of drugs, illegal firearms and other contraband goods, the exporting of hijacked vehicles and the cross-border movement of illegal immigrants.
- To address the problem of overcrowded prisons, the Department of Correctional Services intends introducing an electronic monitoring system, a device locked around the ankle, whereby convicted prisoners can be released and placed under community supervision - a system which is more cost effective than imprisonment.
- To develop human resources and to improve the quality of services to the community, through *inter alia*, training programmes, the upgrading of the infrastructure, improved computerised programmes and the improvement of victim support services.
- To establish and expand partnerships with the private sector, for example, the banks assisting the state with its border control functions, and the combatting of commercial crimes.

During the *Review Debate on Criminal Justice Cluster* in the National Council of Provinces in June 2000, the Minister of Safety and Security made reference to the strategic and operational plan of the SAPS for the next three years. Priorities that he highlighted included

- to eradicate corruption;
- to pay special attention to violent crimes including, gang violence and 'social fabric' crimes with a specific focus on violence against women and children;

- to make major break-throughs into organised crime relating to:
 - vehicle theft and hijacking;
 - drug trafficking;
 - bank robbery and the robbery of cash in transit;
 - illegal plundering of the marine resources;
 - money laundering;
 - high-tech transnational crimes and cyber crime;
 - commercial crime;
 - illegal firearms; and
 - precious metals and stones (South Africa, 2000).

From his address it was evident that the main focus was on law enforcement, whilst no mention was made about the importance of crime prevention activities. This could easily create the impression that the role of crime prevention is played down against that of law enforcement. It was also evident that residential burglary, which is the most common crime in South Africa, was not mentioned as a priority at national level.

There are many reasons why crime prevention is still in its infancy and its impact still limited. The slow pace of implementing crime prevention strategies can be attributed to a number of factors, including:

- Social crime prevention is a relatively new concept for law enforcement agencies and, although the concept is accepted and written into national strategies, the operationalisation and implementation thereof in practical terms has not realised in any significant way. Part of the problem is that the basic orientation of security force members remains towards law enforcement and not crime prevention.
- Crime prevention initiatives will be more successful if they are directed at specific crimes and implemented through multi-agency co-operation. However, the diverse nature of the many priority crimes in South Africa and the problem of interdepartmental co-operation, make it difficult to implement and manage multi-agency programmes/projects aimed at different priority crimes.
- Multi-agency crime prevention programmes are also time-consuming, and dependent on skilled and committed officials who have experience in project planning and management. The capacity problems in terms of personnel and financial resources experienced by most government departments also serve as a constraining factor.

- The absence of effective crime prevention structures at provincial and local government levels, similar to the NCPC, may also hamper the implementation of crime prevention programmes at local government and community level. The current process of transformation and restructuring of state departments and of local governments, may also delay the implementation of crime prevention strategies.
- A further problem is the lack of intelligence and systematic analysis of available information on specific types of crime. Traditionally, law enforcement agencies are more interested in the solving of cases, that is, to arrest and prosecute the perpetrators, and not to understand the underlying dynamics or driving forces behind specific types of crime.

6.7.2 Meso-level initiatives

Crime prevention at the police station level (meso-level) can be divided between those initiatives taken by the official structures of the state and those taken by communities to protect themselves against criminal activity. In this section attention is given to the concepts of Community Policing, and private community initiatives.

6.7.2.1 Community Policing

Community Policing has been written into the Police Service Act and has been adopted as the operational philosophy of the SAPS. Community Policing can be defined as “a philosophy of or an approach to policing which recognises the interdependence and shared responsibility of the police and the community in ensuring a safe and secure environment for all the people of the country. Community Policing aims to establish an active and equal partnership between the police and the public through which crime and community safety issues can jointly be determined and solutions designed and implemented” (South Africa, 1998:1). In the *Manual on Community Policing (Policy, Framework and Guidelines)*(South Africa, 1998:2-4) the following elements can be singled out as crucial in explaining the meaning of Community Policing:

- The role of the police officer becomes that of peace officer rather than that of law enforcement officer involved solely in crime control. In the new capacity the police are called upon to enforce the law, to prevent crime, promote public order, resolve conflict, enhance police-community relations, and render general services and assistance to the public.
- Community Policing involves a pro-active approach to policing. The focus of the police

is broadened from a reactive focus on serious crime and a consequent over-emphasis of law enforcement to a pro-active focus on the prevention of crime, the solution of community problems and addressing the causes of crime and disorder.

- Community Policing requires the development of specific tactics to reduce the fear of being victimised, particularly among children, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups in society.

In adherence to the principle of creating partnerships between the police and the community, the institution of CPFs has been entrenched in legislation. The CPFs are intended to assist the police, *inter alia*, to: improve the delivery of police-service to the community; promote joint problem identification and problem-solving; joint crime prevention initiatives; ensure police accountability and transparency; and ensure consultation and proper communication between the police and the community (South Africa, 1998:3).

Although essential, the ideals of Community Policing will only remain a philosophy when the current workload and limited capacity (human and technical) at most police stations are taken into account. The results of an IDASA survey study in 1998 on crime prevention in Pretoria confirmed this conclusion (Rauch, 1998). The station commissioners who were interviewed in the IDASA study, mentioned the following obstacles or problems that hampered effective functioning:

- Seventy-seven per cent mentioned the lack of human resources, referring to the insufficient number of police officials.
- Seventy-three per cent indicated the lack of physical resources, including vehicles for patrol and response work, and technical equipment.
- Fifty-nine per cent referred to the negative community attitudes and lack of co-operation. The police struggle to secure and maintain community involvement and co-operation with crime prevention initiatives in those areas where they find the community hostile towards them. In communities where private security is common (in the more affluent areas), the residents tend to be less co-operative with the police and less inclined to participate in community police forums, because they do not rely on the police as the sole providers of security services. Other obstacles that were mentioned included, communities that are "tolerant" of crime; not reporting crime; and providing a market for stolen goods.
- Twenty-seven per cent mentioned problems with police morale, commitment, skills and training that hampered their ability to deal effectively with crime.

- Twenty-seven per cent were of the opinion that unstable social conditions such as alcoholism and drugs, unstable families, street children, unemployment and relative deprivation also inhibit the police's ability to tackle crime effectively.
- Police corruption was mentioned 18 per cent of the police stations.
- Insurance fraud was also identified as an obstacle, because it consumes police time and resources.

However, from the interviews conducted in this study, it became clear that the two police stations of Garsfontein and Pretoria West both experienced problems with regard to capacity and an overload of work per officer, which forced them to focus more on their law enforcement functions at the expense of crime prevention initiatives. In both areas CPFs were functioning, and although they helped to improve relationships with the communities and to assist in awareness campaigns, they were not in the position to alleviate the work pressures experienced at the police stations.

The establishment of a municipal police service for the Pretoria Metropolitan area, as envisaged after the 2000 municipal elections, could in future assist local police stations with visible policing and other crime prevention functions. According to The South African Police Services Amendment Bill (No 39 of 1998), local governments will have the right to establish municipal police services in their areas, depending on how severe crime is and whether the resources and capacity are available. Municipal police officers will have the same powers as those currently held by traffic officers, which means that they will not be able to investigate crime (South Africa, 2000:13).

6.7.2.2 Private community initiatives

6.7.2.2.1 Enclosed neighbourhoods and security villages

In reaction to the fear of crime and the perceived increase of armed robberies and burglary in residential areas, the construction of enclosed neighbourhoods is regarded by many residents as the best option to prevent crime. In the wealthier residential areas in South Africa there is an increased tendency to close off neighbourhoods. The rationale behind the closure of neighbourhoods is to exercise control over vehicle traffic and the movement of people, especially strangers, that will serve as a deterrent for potential criminals to enter the area, out of fear of being observed and apprehended.

A distinction should be drawn between 'enclosed neighbourhoods' and 'security villages'.

According to Landman (2000:3), 'enclosed neighbourhoods' refer to existing neighbourhoods where access control, through gates or booms across existing roads were instituted, and where in many instances the areas were also fenced or walled off. The roads within these neighbourhoods are still public property and the local authority is still responsible for the provision of public services to the community within its boundaries. On the other hand, 'security villages' are private developments where the entire area is developed by a private developer. These areas are physically walled or fenced off and have controlled access by way of security guards. The infrastructure and maintenance thereof is managed by a private management body.

Other than in the case of 'enclosed neighbourhoods' where security is usually the main consideration, 'security villages' represent a new type of urban development, which, besides from improved security, also offer other benefits to the inhabitants such as higher estate values, private schools, open space, and recreational and sport facilities.

Before an existing neighbourhood can be closed off, the local authority has to approve such a request or application first. The problem in South Africa is that no general policy exists specifically with regard to the enclosure of neighbourhoods for security purposes (Landman, 2000:13). Only a few local authorities have already developed their own policies or are in the process of formulating them. The Eastern Metropolitan Local Council of the Greater Johannesburg Metropolitan Council, and the Pretoria City Council are two local authorities that have such policies, based on Section 45 of the Rationalisation of Local Government Affairs Act, 1998 (Act 10 of 1998). Currently local authorities set their own procedural requirements according to the legal framework of that specific province. Generally, these requirements entail (Landman, 2000:16):

- Submitting of a formal application from a residents' association. In most cases the residents establish a Section 21 Company to manage the process and to collect fees. The application should include all the necessary documents required, including a traffic impact study if so required.
- Advertising the intention to close a street or streets in the local newspapers.
- Consulting with the SAPS regarding the proposed enclosure.
- The majority of residents (ranging from 66,6 to 90 per cent, depending on the local authority's regulations) within the affected area must be in favour of the closure plan.

No local authority has the obligation to approve the application if they are not in favour of such a development. The local authority may decide that all road closures may only be

temporary closures, approved for a specific period. The application for neighbourhood enclosures and the gaining of approval, has proven to be a lengthy process. The cost factor for the residents in terms of implementation costs and monthly installments to pay for security guards and in some instances for private security companies, should be taken into account. It is also important to note that 'enclosed neighbourhoods' could have different levels of protection, depending on the ability to have total or partial control over the movement of people and vehicles in and out of the security area.

Seeing that 'enclosed neighbourhoods' is a fairly new phenomenon in South Africa, it is difficult to assess the effectiveness thereof in terms of crime prevention. In South Africa initial findings suggest that certain types of crime such as burglary and hijackings have decreased significantly in 'enclosed neighbourhoods' (Landman, 2000:20). Police statistics, however, showed that police stations were regularly requested to attend to crime offences within enclosed areas, which indicated that these areas were not totally crime free. An example is the high security estate of Mooikloof near Pretoria, where seven burglaries were reported during the festive season of December 2001 (Beeld, 2002).

A study by Blakely and Snyder (1997) on 'enclosed communities' in the United States showed that in some cases a reduction in crime was reported, in other cases only temporary reductions were registered, and in some no changes occurred. Professional criminals and syndicates might not be easily deterred by fences and closed entrances, specifically for the reason that residents may develop a false sense of security and become negligent. A reduction in vehicle traffic and pedestrian movement may also reduce natural surveillance, whilst strangers in the area may be accepted as being officially permitted to the area.

Apart from the safety and security benefits of 'enclosed neighbourhoods', there may be also concerns about:

- difficulties with regard to maintenance and services;
- reducing response time of emergency vehicles;
- dividing communities, causing urban fragmentation and separation;
- possible social exclusion, and tensions between urban residents;
- a false sense of security, or to the contrary, increasing the fear of crime; and
- crime displacement, to the detriment of surrounding residential areas (Landman, 2000:25).

An increased tendency towards 'closed neighbourhoods' may become an obstacle in the Government's aim, as spelled out in policy documents such as the Development Facilitation Act and the Green Paper on Planning and Development in 1999, to develop integrated urban areas. On the other hand, if this type of development is an effective way of establishing

safer communities, a conflict of interest may arise between the local residents who have the right to a safer environment and the local authorities who have the dual obligation to develop integrated urban areas and to protect its citizens from criminal activity.

6.7.2.2.2 Community organisation and citizen patrols

An alternative to the physical enclosure of neighbourhoods is the establishment of Homeowners Associations that may function as a Section 21 Companies, but instead of campaigning for the enclosure of their neighbourhood, they built vibrant community organisations with sub-divisions and street cells that effectively communicate and interact with the residents. The aim is to initiate projects which include safety patrols, regular neighbourhood clean-ups, and sharing information through regular newsletters. The co-operation of the local authority and the police is sought to ensure that the maximum impact is achieved (Landman, 2000:26).

The difference between the Homeowners Association and the traditional Neighbourhood Watch is that the former is better organised through subscribed membership, the payment of monthly levies and the employment of volunteers (e.g. pensioners) to staff the control room on a full-time basis. Sub-committees and structures are established to ensure effective functioning, including: a management committee; a control room; patrolling of neighbourhood; access control; safety houses; newsletter/liaison/marketing; administration; and finances. According to research findings there are initial improvements in the crime situation after the introduction of street patrols by the residents themselves (Landman, 2000:26).

The challenge in the longer term will be to maintain the interest of the residents and their involvement in the execution of civilian patrols and other projects. According to Bennett (1992:281), a study of the effectiveness of Neighbourhood Watch programmes in Hartford, Connecticut (USA) showed that after an initial drop in both burglary and robbery rates, there was again an increase in the rates after two years that indicated no difference between the rates in the experimental area and that of the city as a whole. Bennett (1992:282) also cited research findings in Britain which showed no evidence that Neighbourhood Watch resulted in a sustainable reduction in the levels of victimisation.

6.7.2.2.3 Vigilante activity

The high level of crime and the government's perceived failure to curb crime had resulted in the emergence of strong community reaction in the form of vigilante actions, where organisations tend to take the law into their own hands. Some of the known vigilante groups

in South Africa are the Mapogo-a-Mathamaga that originated in the Northern Province and Mpumalanga; PAGAD in the Western Cape; and the Umfelandawonye in the Eastern Cape. These groups advocate strong and harsh punishment for criminals.

According to Sekhonyane (2000:21), vigilante actions, although supported by many, are characterised by acts of severe punishment and violence including serious assault and murder, and in some instances involvement in illegal acts such as kidnappings, crimen injuria, malicious damage to property, theft, robbery and sabotage. The methods they use, bring them in disrepute and conflict with State authorities.

Because of the general poor relationships between vigilante groups and the government there is an absence of effective lines of communication lines between these groups and state organs such as the police. If properly regulated, certain vigilante type activities could be incorporated into the concept of community justice or community courts as expounded in a discussion paper by the South African Law Commission (Sekhonyane, 2000:25). It is also expected that public support for vigilante groups will decline if the effectiveness of the criminal justice system improves. However, for the time being, their supporters will continue to use them as a shield of protection against possible criminal attacks and to bring criminals to book.

6.8 CONCLUSION

The aim of this chapter was to provide a theoretical perspective on crime prevention and to conceptualise a burglary prevention approach that could be applied in assessing the vulnerability of a specific residential location and to suggest appropriate security measures to counter possible future burglaries.

To curb the problem of residential burglary, an integrated approach towards burglary prevention was suggested, where initiatives taken at the micro-level, were complemented by initiatives taken at the meso- and macro-levels. At the micro-level, burglary prevention initiatives should focus on the elimination of opportunities for burglary through the application of situational crime prevention measures. These measures should then be supported at the meso-level through community organisation and actions, such as Neighbourhood Watch, or access control over strangers. The local police, CPFs and the municipal police services should increasingly focus on applying the principles of community policing.

At the macro-level greater emphasis should be placed on the implementation of already existing policies and strategies relating to crime prevention. Multi-agency planning at the national and provincial level (macro-) should be aimed at facilitating specific programmes or

operations at the community and local level to address a specific crime problem. Greater emphasis on crime prevention would imply a reorientation of thinking, training, allocation of resources, and collection and analysis of information.

Despite the seriousness of residential burglary, and the impact thereof on individuals' lives, it is not regarded as a priority crime by many in the higher institutional echelons, *inter alia*, as a result of its non-violent nature. Consequently, resources in crime prevention and law enforcement activities are often directed at other crimes. To counter this tendency, individual households and communities have started to implement their own security measures and initiatives, which in turn stimulated the current growth in the private security industry.

In Chapter 7 an assessment will be made of the findings of this study, how the objectives were realised, what problems were experienced, and to formulate recommendations for possible further research.